

January 5, 2007

The Honorable Robert Duncan
Chairman, Senate Committee on State Affairs
PO Box 12068
Austin, TX 78711

Dear Chairman Duncan:

Congratulations on the completion of the Senate Committee on State Affairs' Interim Report. The Committee did an excellent job of identifying important issues to examine and identified sound and appropriate recommendations relating to its charges.

Despite our support for most of the Committee's recommendations, we take exception to the findings associated with Charge 3 on voter identification. Although the report explicitly states, "The Committee makes no recommendation regarding policy issues in favor of or in opposition to voter identification and/or ballot authenticity," we feel the conclusion implies that photo ID requirements are desirable. Furthermore, with respect to claims that additional voter ID requirements may disenfranchise certain populations, the conclusion asserts, "there are no studies presenting data to support such claims." However, Georgia Secretary of State, Cathy Cox, recently completed a demographic analysis revealing that between a quarter and a third of senior and African American voters lack state issued photo identification, thus disenfranchising them from the elections process. The Secretary's findings can be found at: <http://www.sos.state.ga.us/pressrel/062306.htm>

In the conclusion of the report, photo identification requirements for participation in state administered services such as the Food Stamp Program are cited. However, the ability to vote is a basic right for all citizens and therefore, should not be likened to services that require additional documentation. Texas should do everything in its power to facilitate ease of voting and we feel additional ID requirements would present an undue burden for voters.

Requiring additional personal identification for voters would also result in an unnecessary cost to the State. Furthermore, the report includes the following statement which implies that additional voter identification requirements would serve little practical purpose with respect to decreasing instances of voter fraud, "It is unknown whether the current level of voter fraud will decrease, but a voter photo ID law will certainly prevent some fraud." Testimony provided by the Office of the Secretary of State indicates extremely low instances of in-person voter fraud. It is our shared belief that anti-fraud measures adopted by the federal Help America Vote Act (HAVA), sufficiently deter voter fraud and that additional photo identification measures are unnecessary.

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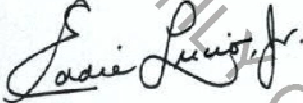
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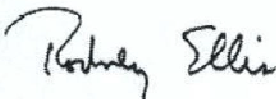
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Please do not hesitate to contact either one of us regarding this issue, or any other matter of concern to the Committee. Thank you very much for your attention to this matter and for outstanding work on the report.

Sincerely,



Eddie Lucio, Jr.
State Senator, District 27



Rodney Ellis
State Senator, District 13

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